Office of the Auditor General
Follow-Up Report on Prior Audit Recommendations

Special Alternative Incarceration Program for Men

Michigan Department of Corrections

November 2026

State of Michigan Auditor General
Doug A. Ringler, CPA, CIA

472-0202-19F

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Article IV, Section 53 of the Michigan Constitution

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Report Summary

Follow-Up Report
Special Alternative Incarceration Program for Men
Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)

Report Number:
472-0202-19F

Released:
November 2026

We conducted this follow-up to determine whether MDOC had taken appropriate corrective measures in response to the two material conditions noted in our September 2020 audit report.

Prior Audit Information	Follow-Up Results		
	Conclusion	**Finding**	**Agency Preliminary Response**
Finding 1 - Material condition Improved monitoring of secure perimeter access needed. Agency agreed.	Substantially complied	Not applicable.	
Finding 2 - Material condition Completion of cell searches and trainee shakedowns needs improvement. Agency agreed.	Substantially complied	Not applicable.	

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November 5, 2026

Heidi E. Washington, Director
Michigan Department of Corrections
Grandview Plaza Building
Lansing, Michigan

Director Washington:

This is our follow-up report on the two material conditions (Findings 1 and 2) and two corresponding recommendations reported in the performance audit of the Special Alternative Incarceration Program for Men, Michigan Department of Corrections. That audit report was issued and distributed in September 2020.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during our follow-up. If you have any questions, please call me or Laura J. Hirst, CPA, Deputy Auditor General.

Sincerely,

Doug Ringler

Doug Ringler
Auditor General

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INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE OF FOLLOW-UP, AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of our follow-up of the two material conditions* (Findings 1 and 2) and two corresponding recommendations reported in our performance audit* of the Special Alternative Incarceration Program (SAI) for Men, Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC), issued September 2020.

PURPOSE OF FOLLOW-UP

To determine whether MDOC had taken appropriate corrective measures to address our corresponding recommendations.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

SAI was created by Public Act 287 of 1988 (Sections 798.11 - 798.18 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*) as an alternative prison program for selected male probationers who were convicted of certain crimes. Public Act 22 of 1992 amended the eligibility criteria to include both male and female prisoners* and probationers.

SAI focuses on each individual's assessed risks and needs and provides targeted programming and training. The evidence-based programs provided during the offender's SAI experience include items such as cognitive journaling, substance abuse therapy, education, and employment readiness.

SAI trainees* are not afforded the same privileges as offenders housed in other State correctional facilities. For example, SAI trainees are allowed to have very limited personal property and are not allowed to receive funds from any source.

MDOC and SAI operate under the offender success model* in which the mission is to reduce crime by implementing a seamless plan of services and supervision developed for prisoners, delivered through State and regional collaboration, from the time of their entry into prison through their transition, reintegration, and aftercare into the community.

SAI was previously located at the SAI Facility in Chelsea, Michigan. On March 7, 2020, MDOC relocated SAI operations inside the secure perimeter of Cooper Street Correctional Facility located in Jackson, Michigan.

From October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026, MDOC informed us SAI graduated 221 trainees and incurred total expenditures of $2.9 million, at an average cost of $13,181 per SAI graduate*.

* *See glossary at end of report for definition.*

PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, AGENCY PLAN TO COMPLY, AND FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSIONS

FINDING 1

Audit Finding Classification: Material condition.

Summary of the September 2020 Finding:
SAI did not properly monitor staff, volunteers, and trainees entering and exiting the secure perimeter, increasing the risk of contraband* entering the secure perimeter and trainee escape.

We reviewed selected first and second shift video surveillance of staff, volunteers, and trainees entering and exiting the secure perimeter gate on 13 selected days and noted:

a. 24 (16%) of the 151 trainees and 11 (6%) of 184 staff and volunteers entering the gate did not walk through the full body metal detector* or get screened by a handheld metal detector*.

b. 125 (41%) of the 306 staff and volunteers entering or exiting the gate did not show identification.

c. 11 (20%) of the 54 graduates exiting the gate were not required to show identification cards and were not verified against the release clearance form.

d. 72 (73%) of the 98 trainees exiting the gate did not show identification and were not verified against the trainee detail form; an additional 3 (3%) trainees showed their identification cards but were not verified against the trainee detail form.

e. 129 (87%) of 149 trainees entering the gate did not show identification.

Recommendation Reported in September 2020:
We recommended SAI ensure all staff, volunteers, and trainees entering and exiting the secure perimeter are properly monitored.

AGENCY PLAN TO COMPLY*

On February 23, 2021 MDOC indicated it complied with the recommendation. Specifically, MDOC stated, effective March 7, 2020, it relocated the SAI program for men inside the secure perimeter of the Cooper Street Correctional Facility, and information regarding searches has been included in the facility's SAI intake procedure. All trainees are screened by a metal detection device and must show an appropriate ID before entering the facility through the front gates* and/or sallyport*.

* *See glossary at end of report for definition.*

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

Substantially complied.

We verified MDOC relocated the SAI program for men inside the secure perimeter of Cooper Street Correctional Facility. At this facility, individuals such as staff, volunteers, prisoners, and SAI graduates primarily enter and exit the secure perimeter through the front gate, which includes a full body metal detector, a handheld metal detector, and a package scanner*. The facility also has a sallyport and, when applicable, individuals such as staff and SAI trainees may enter or exit the secure perimeter through this location, which includes a cell sense metal detector* and a handheld metal detector.

In addition, we reviewed video surveillance of various individuals, such as staff, volunteers, prisoners, trainees, and SAI graduates entering and/or exiting the secure perimeter through the front gate and sallyport on selected days and times, and our follow-up noted MDOC:

a. Substantially complied.

   We noted all 562 (100%) individuals reviewed entering the secure perimeter through the front gate walked through the metal detector or were screened by a handheld metal detector. We also noted 26 (96%) of the 27 individuals reviewed entering the secure perimeter through the sallyport walked within range of the cell sense metal detector.

b. Substantially complied.

   We noted 817 (99%) of the 819 staff reviewed entering or exiting the front gate showed identification, and all 21 (100%) staff reviewed entering or exiting the sallyport showed identification.

c. Complied.

   We noted all 33 (100%) graduates reviewed showed identification cards to facility staff who verified them against the release clearance form prior to the graduate exiting through the front gate.

d. Complied.

   We noted all 20 (100%) trainees reviewed showed identification to facility staff who verified it against the trainee detail form prior to the trainee exiting the sallyport.

e. Complied.

   We noted all 13 (100%) trainees reviewed showed identification at the sallyport prior to entering the secure perimeter.

* *See glossary at end of report for definition.*

FINDING 2

Audit Finding Classification: Material condition.

Summary of the September 2020 Finding:
SAI may not have conducted all required cell searches* and trainee shakedowns*, which decreases the likelihood of detecting and confiscating contraband and compromises the safety and security of staff and trainees. Also, SAI documented it conducted cell searches which either were not conducted or were conducted in unrealistically short periods of time.

We reviewed selected SAI cell search and trainee shakedown documentation and surveillance videos and noted SAI:

a. Did not document it conducted 34 (9%) of the 364 required cell (bunk) searches or completed 135 (7%) of the 1,885 required trainee shakedowns on the daily trainee shakedown reports or in the logbook for the sampled time periods. We also noted SAI did not search 13%, 4%, and 8% of cells (bunks) at least once during September 2018, January 2019, and June 2019, respectively.

b. Surveillance video did not corroborate 16 (62%) of the 26 documented cell searches for the selected days and depicted 6 (23%) instances of officers entering and exiting cells between 6 seconds and 84 seconds. These issues raised concerns regarding the thoroughness of the searches or whether the searches actually occurred.

Recommendation Reported in September 2020:
We recommended SAI conduct and document all required cell searches and trainee shakedowns.

AGENCY PLAN TO COMPLY

On February 23, 2021, MDOC indicated it complied with the recommendation. Specifically, MDOC stated:

- SAI developed a more user-friendly shakedown log that outlines cell, personal, and area searches to be completed. The format allows for clearer and more comprehensive documentation of searches conducted. Additionally, Post Orders were being reviewed and updated as needed.

- A Sergeant will be assigned to complete a weekly audit of search requirements to ensure compliance with SAI operating procedure. The audit will include periodic reviews of cameras to verify documented searches are corroborated on video. The Sergeant will report findings to the Deputy Warden weekly.

* *See glossary at end of report for definition.*

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

Substantially complied.

We verified SAI developed and implemented a centralized monthly shakedown logbook, which contains a more user-friendly shakedown log with a standard layout for documenting cell searches and trainee shakedowns. We also verified MDOC implemented a process requiring a sergeant to complete a weekly review of search requirements to ensure compliance with SAI operating procedures and document the completed review in the shakedown logbook.

Specifically, our follow-up noted MDOC:

a. Substantially complied.

   Our review of cell search and trainee shakedown records from October 12, 2025 through October 18, 2025, January 18, 2026 through January 24, 2026, and June 1, 2026 through June 7, 2026 noted SAI documented it conducted all of the 336 required cell (bunk) searches and completed 418 (99%) of the 420 required trainee shakedowns. Also, SAI documented it completed 452 (99%) of the 456 required monthly cell searches during October 2025, January 2026, and June 2026.

b. Substantially complied.

   Our review of surveillance videos for 35 selected cell searches recorded in the cell shakedown logbooks corroborated 34 (97%) cell searches occurred, with officers spending an average of three minutes in the cell. Surveillance video does not capture all activity within a trainee's cell and therefore we could not directly observe whether a thorough search occurred. However, policy directive 05.01.142 limits the amount of property allowed in SAI trainees' cells, reasonably allowing MDOC staff to perform searches of SAI trainee cells in the observed average time frame.

FOLLOW-UP METHODOLOGY AND PERIOD

METHODOLOGY

We reviewed SAI's corrective action plan and applicable MDOC policy directives, operating procedures, and post orders, and interviewed MDOC management and staff regarding the SAI program. Also, for:

- Finding 1, we:
  - Reviewed video surveillance of various individuals, such as staff, prisoners, trainees, and graduates, entering or exiting the secure perimeter through the front gate during judgmentally selected times on the six SAI graduation days (occurring during July 2, 2026 through August 5, 2026) to ensure:
    - Individuals showed identification and walked through the full body metal detector or were screened by a handheld metal detector.
    - Graduates showed identification cards to facility staff who verified them against the release clearance form prior to the graduates exiting the facility.
  - Reviewed video surveillance of various individuals, such as staff and trainees entering or exiting the secure perimeter through the sallyport for 27 of the 226 sallyport log entries which were randomly selected from judgmentally determined time frames occurring from July 2, 2026 through August 5, 2026 to ensure:
    - Individuals showed identification and walked within range of the cell sense metal detector or were screened by a handheld metal detector.
    - Trainees showed identification to facility staff who verified it against the trainee detail form prior to the trainee exiting the facility.
    - Trainees showed identification prior to entering the facility.
- Finding 2, we:
  - Obtained an example of the centralized monthly shakedown logbook to verify SAI developed a more user-friendly shakedown log which includes

a standard layout for documenting the completed cell searches and trainee shakedowns.

- Reviewed randomly selected cell search and trainee shakedown records for October 12, 2025 through October 18, 2025, January 18, 2026 through January 24, 2026, and June 1, 2026 through June 7, 2026 from the population of shakedown logs from August 2025 through July 2026 to:
  - Ensure all required cell (bunk) searches and trainee shakedowns were completed.
  - Verify sergeants documented a weekly review of search requirements in the shakedown logbook intended to ensure compliance with the SAI operating procedures.
- Reviewed randomly selected shakedown logs for October 2025, January 2026, and June 2026 from the population of shakedown logs from August 2025 through July 2026 to ensure each cell was searched at least once each month.
- Reviewed surveillance video for 35 haphazardly selected cell searches from a population of 656 cell searches documented in the shakedown log from July 2, 2026 through August 11, 2026 to corroborate the cell searches occurred as documented in the logbook and to evaluate the cell search duration.

We used random sampling to reduce bias and project our results to the respective populations and judgmental sampling to ensure coverage of certain activities occurring at the front gate and sallyport. Where a combination of random and judgmental sampling was used, we could not project the results to those populations.

PERIOD

Our follow-up generally covered September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2026.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

agency plan to comply	The response required by Section 18.1462 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* for an audited agency to develop a plan to comply with Office of the Auditor General audit recommendations and submit the plan to the State Budget Office upon audit completion. The State of Michigan Financial Management Guide (Part VII, Chapter 3, Section 100) requires the audited agency to develop the plan as early as practicable and within 60 days after report issuance and submit the plan to OIAS, State Budget Office. Within 30 days of receipt, OIAS will either accept the plan as final or contact the agency to take additional steps to finalize the plan.
cell search	The act of going through a prisoner's cell and belongings looking for contraband.
cell sense metal detector	An upright, portable, stand-alone detector used at a facility for screening prisoners. Despite the use of the term cell, they are not used *inside* a prison cell.
contraband	Property not allowed on facility grounds or in visiting rooms by State law, rule, or MDOC policy. For prisoners, this includes any property they are not specifically authorized to possess, authorized property in excessive amounts, or authorized property that has been altered without permission.
front gate	Central point of entry to enter and exit the secure perimeter of a facility, also known as the bubble.
full body metal detector	A stationary metal detection screening device, through which an individual walks at a normal pace, to detect metal objects on the person's body as part of the security screening process.
graduate	Former prisoner or probationer, now a trainee, who graduated from SAI.
handheld metal detector	A portable, hand-operated metal-detection screening device used by MDOC staff to detect metal on a person during security screening.
material condition	A matter, in the auditor's judgment, which is more severe than a reportable condition and could impair the ability of management to operate a program in an effective and efficient manner and/or could adversely affect the judgment of an interested person concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. Our

	assessment of materiality is in relation to the respective audit objective.
MDOC	Michigan Department of Corrections.
offender success model	A model which aims to reduce crime by implementing a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each prisoner - delivered through State and local collaboration - from the time of their entry into prison through their transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community.
OIAS	Office of Internal Audit Services.
package scanner	An advanced baggage and parcel inspection system used to screen packages, mail, and visitor or prisoner belongings.
performance audit	An audit which provides findings or conclusions based on an evaluation of sufficient, appropriate evidence against criteria. Performance audits provide objective analysis to assist management and those charged with governance and oversight in using the information to improve program performance and operations, reduce costs, facilitate decision-making by parties with responsibility to oversee or initiate corrective action, and contribute to public accountability.
prisoner	Person serving a term of incarceration under the jurisdiction of MDOC.
SAI	Special Alternative Incarceration Program.
sallyport	A controlled, secure gate by which vehicles can enter the facility grounds through the perimeter fencing.
shakedown	The act of searching a prisoner, an employee, or a visitor to ensure they do not possess any contraband.
trainee	An offender and participant in SAI (either a prisoner or a probationer).

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